UNITED NATIONS ADVANCE MISSION IN CAMBODIA (UNAMIC)

Headquarters
Phnom Penh

Date operational
9 November 1991

Maximum strength
380 military and civilian personnel

Chief Liaison Officer
Mr. A.H.S. Ataul Karim (Bangladesh)

Historical background

On 23 October 1991, at the final meeting of the resumed Paris Conference on Cambodia, the Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict were signed by Cambodia and 18 other nations in the presence of the United Nations Secretary-General. The agreements were the culmination of a decade-long negotiating process in which the Secretary-General had been closely involved from the outset.[1]

The Paris Conference was first convened by its co-Presidents, France and Indonesia, in August 1989. Although progress was made at that time, the parties were unable to reach an agreement. The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States) were subsequently able to develop, at a series of high-level meetings between January and August 1990, the outline of a comprehensive settlement. On 10 September 1990, the four Cambodian parties accepted this framework in its entirety and also agreed to form the Supreme National Council (SNC) as the unique legitimate body and source of authority in Cambodia throughout a transitional period. The framework was subsequently endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 668 of 20 September 1990 and by the General Assembly on 15 October (resolution 45/3).

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The Five then called upon the co-Presidents of the Paris Conference to make the necessary arrangements for the elaboration of a comprehensive political settlement agreement based on the framework. On 26 November 1990, the co-Presidents and the Five agreed on a text containing three main parts, namely: 1) a general agreement with detailed annexes covering the proposed mandate for the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC); the military arrangements during the transitional period; elections; the repatriation of Cambodian refugees and displaced persons; and principles for a new constitution; 2) an agreement covering international guarantees; and 3) a declaration regarding the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Cambodia.

From 21 to 23 December 1990, the co-Presidents convened a meeting with the SNC in order to present formally to the SNC members the 26 November text. The meeting resulted in concurrence on most of the fundamental points. In mid-June 1991, Prince Norodom Sihanouk joined the SNC, and subsequently chaired its 24-26 June meeting. In July, the SNC unanimously agreed to elect him president. At these and other meetings in which the co-Presidents and the representative of the Secretary-General participated, remaining differences were resolved to clear the way for the signing of the Agreements in Paris and the beginning of the transitional period. The Agreements were fully supported by the Security Council in its resolution 718 of 31 October 1991.

Establishment of UNAMIC

In the Agreements, among other things, the Security Council is invited to establish UNTAC and to provide it with the mandate set forth in the Agreements. During the initial phase prior to UNTAC's establishment and deployment, the Secretary-General

1/ For an account of the peace process until September 1990, see DPI/1091, "Towards peace in Cambodia".

suggested that the United Nations could assist the Cambodian parties to maintain their cease-fire by deploying in Cambodia a small advance mission. Such an advance mission could be envisaged as the first stage of the good offices mechanism foreseen in the Agreements. The mission would consist mainly of military liaison officers who would help the parties address and resolve any violations or alleged violations of the cease-fire. In his report to the Security Council of 30 September 1991, the Secretary-General recommended that the Council authorize the establishment of the United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC).

On 16 October 1991, in its resolution 717, the Security Council approved the report and decided to establish UNAMIC under its authority immediately after the signing of the agreements on a comprehensive political settlement. UNAMIC became operational on 9 November 1991.

UNAMIC'S structure and activities

UNAMIC is under the command of the United Nations, vested in the Secretary-General under the authority of the Security Council. The duration of its mandate - expected to be less than six months - extends from the signature of the Agreement on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict until the establishment of UNTAC by the Security Council and the adoption of its budget by the General Assembly. At that time, UNAMIC will be absorbed into UNTAC.

UNAMIC consists of 8 civilian liaison staff, 50 military liaison officers, a military mine-awareness unit of 20 military personnel, and 75 international and 75 local support staff. Voluntary contributions include a communications unit of approximately 40 military personnel provided by Australia and an air unit consisting of 112 personnel, four helicopters and 1 fixed-wing aircraft provided by France.

The mission is led in the field by a civilian Chief Liaison Officer, who also has responsibility for liaison with the Supreme National Council on the preparations for the deployment of UNTAC and on other matters related to the role of the United Nations in the implementation of the Agreement.

Command of the military elements of UNAMIC is entrusted to a Senior Military Liaison Officer, who will also chair the Mixed Military Working Group referred to in the Agreement. This Group will be used, as appropriate, to facilitate fulfilment of the tasks of the military component of UNAMIC.

One of these tasks is to facilitate communications between the military headquarters of the four Cambodian parties in matters relating to the cease-fire. To that end, UNAMIC will establish its headquarters in Phnom Penh and will deploy liaison teams to the general military headquarters of each of the Cambodian parties and at two other locations. It will have its own communications network linking its headquarters and the five liaison teams. It will use its good offices, including the passing of messages between the parties and arranging meetings between them, in order to resolve difficulties, restore the status quo and determine measures to be taken to avoid any recurrence of cease-fire violations.

In its mine-awareness role, UNAMIC will deploy small teams of military personnel with experience in training civilian populations on how to avoid injury from mines or booby traps. Initially, the teams will give priority to populations living in or close to areas of recent military confrontation. In due course, this initial programme will be expanded into those foreseen in the Agreement, giving priority, in consultations with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to repatriation routes, reception centres and resettlement areas.

Composition

Military personnel are being provided by Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Poland, Senegal, Tunisia, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Uruguay.

Financial aspects

The Secretary-General has estimated expenditures of $19.9 million for a six-month period. These costs will be met by the assessed contributions of United Nations Member States.

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